

RESTORING WHOLENESS

This Report, the third prepared by the MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church and Society, reflects the dynamics of discussions on how the church can free individuals and society in ways that will bring abundant life, Shalom, for all. Ann McGrew Bennett, in her article on "Women in the New Society," writes: "Is not Shalom only fully comprehensible as an 'Age of the Spirit' and of the 'Community of the Spirit' in which the Spirit will be poured out on sons and daughters, the old, the young, slaves and free--on all persons equally without distinction? We are one earth, one people. Chauvinistic militarism, impersonal ecocide and genocide, racism and sexism are inexplicably bound together. They destroy earth and atmosphere. They destroy the humanity of the oppressor and the lives of the oppressed."

Our task is one of restoring wholeness. The dialogue is beginning. . . in women studies classes at EMC, conference consultations, inter-Mennonite assemblies, and Sunday school discussion groups. Women are hearing each other talk and affirming each other's gifts. One of the strengths of the Nov. 9-10 MCC Peace Section Assembly on "The Interdependence of Men and Women" was the involvement of almost fifty women as discussion leaders or speakers. Over 200 women and men attended the Assembly, held at Camp Friedenswald in Michigan. A large part of the time was spent in interest groups to discuss topics such as male-female roles in intentional communities; families without children; families with children; abortion; socialization of children; alternatives to marriage; identity; women and welfare; racism and sexism; Biblical material; sexuality; the use of gifts in local congregations; Christian feminists and the church; Anabaptist women; women in church structures and institutions; and men and women at seminary.

As evident in the discussion groups at the Assembly and in our 'Reader Response' section, the voice is not always of one accord. For example, some women defend male-oriented language as "generic language," meaning that the masculine terms denote both sexes. Other women are calling this "generic language" into question as an inadequate and less than full expression of human experience. The dialogue is healthy; let's see it continue.

The December Report also includes an examination of some of the challenges the church is facing. The GCMC and MCC structure study expose the very low representation of women in decision-making positions. Marilyn Yoder's letter points out some of the frustrations women are experiencing in their local congregations.

The dialogue - the challenge - what about the response? Read Anna Schroeder's article on overcoming the 'Martha complex' and the recommendations growing out of the GC consultation on the role of women. The ideas are stimulating. Each one of us must look for ways of implementing them.

PEACE SECTION APPROVES TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Peace Section Task Force received approval to act on the recommendations presented to members of the Peace Section at the November 8-9 meeting. The Task Force received authorization to compile a packet of reprints relating to women in the church, to be available early next year. A proposal for the development of an essay book was also approved. At this stage of thinking, the objectives of the book would be to (a) encourage serious study of women and the church; (b) foster discussion of Biblical materials related to the role of women; (c) examine the contribution of women to the Anabaptist movement; and (d) point toward an interdependent, cooperative mentality. Winter of 1975 is seen as a possible publication date. Another project of the Task Force will be to organize and conduct a seminar for women that will examine the forces and pressures, especially governmental and institutional, that are changing the fabric of family life. How does the family survive in a country which, Dr. Margaret Mead believes, has fallen into "a pit of deterioration, corruption, apathy, indifference, and outright brutality toward the weak, the sick, the young, and the poor"? As it now appears, the seminar will be held in May. More information on the seminar and other Task Force projects will be announced later.

CHANGES RECOMMENDED IN RELATIONSHIP OF CHURCH AND WOMEN AT GC CONSULTATION

Greater representation of women on conference boards, a new direction for the Women's Missionary Association, and a broad program of congregational education on the role of women in church and society were recommended by participants in a consultation on the role of women in the General Conference Mennonite Church.

The consultation, held October 25-27 on the campus of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, was called by the GC's Commission on Home Ministries. The Commission began looking at the role of women in conference structures when it realized in 1972 that all 14 members of the Commission were men. It added 2 voting representatives of the WMA, but the General Board said this would require a change in the bylaws to be legal.

Attending the consultation were commission and General Board members and staff; a seminary board member, faculty, and students; WMA executive council members; MCC Peace Section representatives; and a number of other special invitees--about fifty-six in all. Thirty-seven were women.

The group listened to presentations on the historical role of women, New Testament interpretation of women's roles, the WMA, and what women are doing in the church now. Then the participants divided into task groups to formulate specific recommendations for action within the conference. Among the recommendations were the following:

1. Curriculum: Include stories about women from Anabaptist and Bible history at a ratio of at least one woman to two men; show modern women in a variety of roles; emphasize the sharing and affirming of gifts of both sexes; choose language images carefully.
2. Academia: Undertake Biblical scholarship, courses, research, and seminars on the role of women and changing life styles; create experiences that sensitize pastors, teachers, chaplains, and counselors to the needs of women.
3. 1974 General Conference in St. Catharines, Ontario: Focus at least one Bible study on the role of women; involve women as speakers, nominees, and leaders of insight groups. (Two women were appointed to write to district and provincial WMAs for names of qualified women to stand for election. Others were delegated to speak to the program committee about the inclusion of women in all aspects of conference programming.)
4. Resource Person: Hire a resource person to work for the next triennium, possibly providing help for congregations in establishing small groups where gifts can be affirmed, organizing consciousness-raising seminars for regional church leaders, sending out teams of men and women to work at consciousness-raising in local congregations, and publicizing and developing resource materials for adult education in this area.
5. WMA: Receive authorization to appoint one voting member to each commission and the seminary board; re-evaluate its existence as a separate organization in 1980; change its name to Women in Mission; appoint a "think tank" to explore new programs and projects and report back by August 1972; get a cross-cultural perspective through appointment of representatives to such groups as Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, League of Women Voters, and MCC Peace Section seminars in Washington, D.C.
6. Family Structure: Develop a study series on single persons; promote workshops on the family constellation.
7. Mennonite Media: Publish articles, books, Sunday school material, and study guides on women's issues; commission Faith and Life Radio and Television to do the next series of one-minute communication spots on human liberation.
8. Congregational Education: Encourage the Commission on Home Ministries and the colleges to send out teams of study leaders, musicians, or dramatists to interested church groups to deal with women's issues.

(Adapted from a longer report prepared by Lois Barrett Janzen, associate editor of The Mennonite.)

THE MARTHA COMPLEX

by

Anna Schroeder

We are still beguiled by the Martha complex--the idea that women are to keep silent in church, run homes, raise children, and feed delegates at church conferences. When we study Paul's letters, we give careful cultural weight to his remarks about "meat offered to idols," length of hair, and slave-holding. How about a close look at his reasons for restricting women's public activities? Greek women were possessions, not always worth as much as a horse. For a Greek Christian to love his wife as himself would be revolutionary enough for the time. Hebrew women were definitely second-class citizens, though they were able to inherit property, and so were accorded status as persons under Mosaic law. Yet none of the dominant societies gave women any public status; any influence women wielded had to be behind the scenes. A woman speaking her mind was about as acceptable as a striptease in church, since prostitutes and public entertainers were the only women who did so.

Jesus accepted Mary as a student. He even said her behavior was preferable to Martha's. It seems to me that in spite of her complaints, Martha had the easier job. There are plenty of Marthas in the ranks of the male members of our churches who feel that their duties are fulfilled if they hold a steady job and occasionally lay something in the offering plate. Conversely, the women can get together and have great fellowship over a practical job like an MCC self-help store. On the other hand, studying together and discussing spiritual matters honestly leads to hurt feelings and quarrels.

Any problem we have with women being in short supply in the higher echelons of decision-making systems is as much the women's fault as the men's. It is easier to sit back and let someone else decide. It is more fun to sit on the sidelines and snipe at the way our delegates voted at this conference or that than to sit down and become acquainted with the issues ourselves, to vote, and to accept and support the results. This works at congregational levels, too. It is much easier for a mother to stay home with the children on congregational meeting nights, and then be righteously indignant if some question was not resolved to her own liking. (I speak from experience here!)

We need to encourage each other to speak up, stand up, and accept challenges. We need to take time to study, to get to know our own abilities, and to accept opportunities to serve. Sure, it is pleasant when the men help wash dishes after a banquet. How about turning about and having women usher at some services? Why not insist on having a certain number of women on Council? (I have a sinking feeling they would be harder to come by than an equal number of men. I attribute that hesitancy at least as much to laziness as to feelings of inferiority.)

We need to come to terms as a fellowship with the changing status of women in the world. For example, the proportion of married women and mothers who work outside the home is rising constantly. Who looks after the children? The first Sunday schools were started as a missionary endeavor to reach children outside the church. Why do we not encourage our churches to run day care centers and lunch centers for children whose mothers work? Manitoba is building up a chain of thrift shops selling goods to raise money for MCC. It is a proper job to find volunteers to staff these shops because it takes a little more dedication than simply attending ladies aid once or twice a month.

I feel very strongly that women need more education. It is no longer sufficient to "be good and let who will be clever." Girls should be encouraged to do something besides hunt for a husband. Even if they do marry and spend time at home raising children, the better educated women make better mothers. And a woman with more than housekeeping skills in her head is better able to face the time after her children leave home. In other words, start with the young women. I think we are doing that. Then we need patience.

Anna Schroeder (32 19th St., Brandon, Manitoba R7B 1K2) is the mother of four children (three teenagers) and the night supervisor in a nursing home. Anna is a member of the church council, executive committee of the provincial WMA, and the local MCC self-help group.

MEN, WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING IN MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

At the Cabrini MCC Self-Study Conference, November 1-2, participants expressed strong feelings that MCC seek more women for staff and administrative positions. Gayle Koontz, editorial assistant for MCC Information Services, gathered the data on the involvement of women in MCC. Gayle reports that the names of women with ability and experience in administration, overseas work, and leadership are urgently needed or the personnel decision-makers will opt for men by default. "Because of a growing awareness on the part of some administrators due to the publicity women's concerns have been getting in the past year or two, there is more readiness to open some positions to women. The real test is whether women will not only be considered but chosen. Change here, I think, will be slow. There is resistance to women administrators in some quarters and a lot of the old mythology persists. . . . 'But what if she got married halfway through? Her partner might not be interested in her work, which might then suffer. If we invited a woman to work in Akron, what would her husband do? And what about MCCers who wouldn't respect a woman administrator?'"

*The figures below are based on 1972 MCC staff and volunteers (426 men, 333 women).** In levels of decision-making, 182 men rate high while 12 women receive this same ranking. Two men, eight women are given a moderate degree of decision-making power.*

<u>Full-Time Administrators:</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Akron	16	0
*Country Directors (VS or low salary)	20	0
MCC (Canada)	9	0
North America Material Aid Centers	1 (acting director-VS)	3 (1 acting director)

Related Full-Time Administrators:

Menno Housing, Mennonite Disaster Service,
Mennonite Economic Development Associates,
Mennonite Mental Health Services,
Mennonite Indemnity, Inc.
Self-Help (North America)
Peace Section (Akron, Washington)

(Each has one administrator who is male.)

0	2
3	0

Administrative Assistants:

Akron	2 (VS-1)	5
Peace Section	0	1 (VS)
Canada	0	2

Clerical (secretaries, bookkeepers, receptionist, filing clerk)

Akron	1 (VS)	12 (VS-6)
MDS, MEDA, MII	(Each has one who is female.)	
Peace Section	0	3
Canada	0	6

MCC Boards

MCC Executive Committee	8	0
MCC Members	32	1
MCC (Canada) Members	28	1
MCC (Canada) Executive Committee	6	1

Related Boards

Mennonite Mental Health Services	16	0
Mennonite Disaster Services	5	0
Peace Section	20	4
Mennonite Indemnity, Inc.	13	0

"Country directors" does not include unit leaders of large North American programs. Maintenance workers, cooks, clothing center assts., graphic artist, asst. editor, librarian, production room crew, truckers, laundress, hostess, and part-time workers are not reflected in above statistics.

GENERAL CONFERENCE STRUCTURE STUDY

Although women employees of the General Conference Mennonite Church outnumber men, thirty-five to twenty-two, most of the decision-making responsibility rests with the men. All clerical employees are women, and only nine of thirty administrators are women.

Clerical Positions: For the last few years, almost all General Conference employees (including those in Newton, Winnipeg, and Saskatoon) have been placed into one of six categories. At present, no one is in Category I. Category II includes secretaries, receptionist, proofreader, editorial assistants, bookkeeper, etc. All twenty-five are women.

Administrative Positions: Category III includes a wide variety of positions: editor, accountant, director of voluntary service, director of youth ministries, director of personnel, director of mission services, secretary for church planting, secretary for peace and social concerns, manager of Faith and Life Press, etc. Nine of these are women; thirteen are men. Categories IV, V, and VI are all men: three associate executive secretaries, four executive secretaries, and the general secretary.

Wage Scale: Wages in Category II are on an hourly basis. Figured by the year, wages range from \$4,451 to \$5,470, excluding amounts for tenure. Figuring part-time workers on a full-time equivalent basis, salaries in Category III range from \$6,552 to \$9,729. The median is \$8,192. The range for women is \$6,552 to \$8,206, and the range for men is \$7,046 to \$9,729. The medians are \$7,324 for women and \$8,810 for men.

It is difficult to tell whether this difference constitutes discrimination against women. Pay is figured on a base salary plus a complicated system of points for education and responsibility. Most men in this category have seminary training, but only a few women do. Many men came to their job from pastorates.

"Head of Household Allowance": The most glaring difference in salaries of men and women is in base pay. Base pay for all women in this category is \$4,200. All men but one have a base pay of \$4,400. The reason for this discrepancy is the "head of household" allowance of \$200 a year. "Head of household" is defined as a person with dependents. Wives and children are dependents if the employee is a man. Husbands are not dependents and neither are the children of a woman unless she is divorced or widowed. No single persons receive this allowance.

The head of household allowance came into existence about two years ago when the whole salary schedule was revised. In this revision, almost all salaries of women administrators went up, some by as much as 30 percent. The salaries of a few men in Category III went down, and the head of household allowance was an attempt to soften the blow of a salary decrease for these men. However, the idea of such an allowance, which excludes all women now at the office, is being reviewed again.

Salaries in Category IV range from \$9,772 to \$10,286 plus tenure; Category V, \$10,635 plus tenure; and Category VI, \$10,975 plus tenure. Custodian, one bookkeeper, and certain consultants and conference representatives who do not work out of Newton are not in any of these categories.

The General Board which coordinates the overall operation of the General Conference has fourteen men and one woman. The woman is one of five members on the executive committee.

- Submitted by Elaine Roupp, Judi Janzen, Lois Barrett Janzen

Did You Know. . .

• Dotty Janzen was licensed to the Christian ministry by the Faith Church, Newton, Kansas, on November 4. Dotty, presently enrolled in Clinical Pastoral Education at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, is a graduate of New York Biblical Seminary.

• Goshen College's Center for Discipleship has scheduled a workshop on "Masculine/Feminine Roles" for February 22-23. The intention of the workshop, as described in the Center's newsletter, is to "move beyond the level of consciousness-raising to deal at a deeper level with implications of the freedom of Christians--both male and female."

• Ann Jemima Allebach (1874-1918) has been rediscovered. She was the *first American Mennonite woman to be ordained to the ministry*. Allebach was a member of the Eden Mennonite Church of Schwenksville, PA and later the First Mennonite Church of Philadelphia where she was ordained in 1911. According to the 1919 Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac, Allebach "had a number of calls to different churches but did not accept any call until several years ago when she did accept the call to become the active minister of the Sunnyside Reformed Church in New York City. Here she worked faithfully until the end of her life and met with wonderful success, even to such a degree that the public press was attracted and became interested in her work." Rev. Allebach was very active in civic and religious activities. In New York she established a free kindergarten, employment bureau, and commercial school. The Mayor of New York asked her to organize a Municipal Employment Exchange. She was also noted for her writing and speaking skills.

• Miriam E. Martin, professor of nursing at EMC, sends us this announcement: The second Women's Studies course will be taught at EMC during the winter term, 1973-74, December to February. The first such course was taught in the fall of 1972 with an enrollment of 14 students-seven women and seven men. In the spring of 1972 a small consciousness-raising group of student and faculty women met informally at EMC to discuss their role in the college, church, and society. An outgrowth of these sessions was the request for a course about women as one of the offerings by the Sociology Department.

The course was designed to explore both historical and contemporary aspects of the role of women in society. Some of the course objectives were to explore historical influences on woman's societal role; examine the inter-relationship of biological, psychological, and cultural factors with the sociology of women; discuss the role of religion in defining woman's place in society; identify current viewpoints about the role of women in society; and consider our role in relation to topics being discussed.

Throughout the course students were reminded to look at various sides of the issues and to seriously consider their role in bringing about necessary change. Even though the title of the course was Women's Studies, hardly a day passed that male-female relationships were not discussed. The subjects of open-marriage, contract marriage, and equality in marriage often came up. The role of single persons and widows was also studied. The texts used were Ashley Montagu's The Natural Superiority of Women and Constanina Safilious-Rothschild's collection of readings Toward a Sociology of Women. This year we will again use Safilious-Rothschild's book and will also study Lois Clemen's Woman Liberated.

READER RESPONSE

• Marilyn Yoder (R. R. #2, Box 182, Archbold, Ohio 43502) serves as WMSC president and as a member of the Evangelism Commission of the Ohio and Eastern Conference. "I am a homemaker and a school driver. I receive the same wages and have the same responsibilities as a male bus driver. I have an understanding husband who does not need to dominate or smother me. We have four sons, ages 10-19, who respect me as a person and do not expect to be waited on hand and foot by this Mamma. I've tried to bring them up to be independent and thoughtful so that my daughters-in-law will be happy women.

In my home, at my job, and at the conference level church committee, I'm a free individual. In our local congregation I can only work with women and children! Men and women are elected to both the music and library committees in my congregation. Our present Bible School Supt. is a capable woman, although the Children's S.S. Dept. Supt. is still a man--my husband is the elected superintendent just now! I find myself planning with teachers and finding materials for them. I'm presently in the midst of planning the Children's Christmas program. These are all jobs assigned to the superintendent but usually taken over by the wife of the man the church elects. This happens because the man is simply not well enough acquainted with the Children's Department to carry out the work. It's a farce -- we elect a man and his wife does the work. The Sunday Evening Program Committee used to function in this same way, but now husband and wife are elected as a team to the committee. A woman on church council is still unthinkable at this point.

Reader Response, cont.

My thinking and theory keep changing through the years. I've come to the point where I believe women are treated by men as they expect to be, at least to some extent. In a room full of men and women, the women often begin to talk among themselves about recipes, babies, new cupboards, etc. Naturally the men think they have no ability to think beyond their own little worlds. In church business meetings I've noticed that if a woman makes a sensible comment or motion, men do listen and respect her insight.

• Wilma Voth, Rt. 2, Peabody, KS 66866: "As a member of a Mennonite church I feel like shouting Hallelujah that the Peace Section is actually treating the discussion of the status of women seriously."

• Katherine Wiens, 85 Culliton Cres., Regina, Sask., S4S 4J5: "A truly liberated person is a Christ-filled, Christ-centered person willing to be used by God for His purpose. When we are in His will, new doors of opportunity and responsibility will open to us, some beyond our greatest dreams. However, just because we are women doesn't mean we have a right to any position. We have to be God's woman (or God's man) in God's place at God's time. We have to be willing to be His channels in simple tasks as well as the more responsible ones, to be faithful in the mundane as well as the challenging ones. 'If one of you wants to be great, he must be a servant of the rest; and if one of you wants to be first, he must be a slave of all.' (Mark 10:44)

"The terminology suggested by women's liberationists, especially in hymns, etc. should not be given much importance. The dictionary knows that 'fathers' (as in 'Faith of Our Fathers') is equivalent to 'ancestors,' that 'man' refers to the 'human race.' The one that truly disturbs me is to suggest that God could be 'mother.' The spirit that prompts such a statement should be carefully tested. It is directly contrary to Jesus' teaching. In John 14:6 Jesus said, 'No one comes to the Father but by me;' in John 10:30: 'I and my Father are one;' He taught us to pray saying, 'Our Father in heaven.'

"We, an MCC as our representative, must stand firm and not be swayed by every movement that makes itself known in the world. The world won't understand us - that is certain - but the only true liberation comes through Jesus Christ, and we must show the way through love and concern but also through words."

• Differing with the views expressed in the last Report regarding the role of women in her congregation, Pearl Bartel, 1937 Manor Ridge Dr., Lancaster, PA 17603 asked if she could answer the question, 'Is the role of women in your church changing?'

- "I felt one highlight in the past year was a 3-month discussion group which met during the Sunday School hour, and used the material, 'To Be A Man, To Be A Woman.' The discussions were stimulating, helpful, and had a Christian focus, an emphasis I frequently miss in current women's liberation literature.

- "We have three smaller 'house church' groups which meet regularly, where personal problems can be discussed and a real attempt is made to give each member equal status.

- "The church hosted an all-day area women's meeting on the theme, 'The Biblical Role of Women,' led by Dr. and Mrs. Perry Yoder of Bluffton, Ohio.

- A special ad hoc committee was appointed last January at our annual meeting for the single purpose of reviewing the representation of women in church council. There is not one organization in our congregation that is closed to women; we are represented everywhere.

I could go on, but I must close as I am a busy full-time career woman plus a homemaker, wife and mother. I am so liberated I can hardly stand it!"

The Task Force welcomes responses and suggestions. Unless asked to keep correspondence confidential, we will assume that we have permission to print any remarks in the Task Force Reports. Correspondence should be sent to: Task Force on Women, MCC Peace Section, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501.

MULTI-MEDIA RESOURCES

Cassette Tapes:

Women: Perspectives on a Movement, edited by Sarah Bentley Doely (editor of Women's Liberation and the Church). Designed to introduce adult study groups to the major concerns of the women's movement. Background readings, consciousness-raising exercises, and audio cassettes included. Themes discussed are psychology, biology/sexuality, socialization/education, changing life styles, theology/church, politics/economics. Before ordering your own kit (\$12.95, Thesis, P.O. Box 11724, Pittsburgh, PA 15228), you may want to listen to the tapes and read over the materials to see if the kit would be useful for your group. *The Task Force purchased a kit and would be glad to send it to you to preview.*

Films:

Included Out. A 3 min. color film which deals cleverly with the status of women in the church, particularly the discriminatory language of liturgy and hymns. Rental \$7.50/sale \$66. Order from Mass Media Ministries, 2116 No. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218 or 1720 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, MO 63103.

Eve 'N' Us. This consciousness-raising filmstrip reviews the images and the roles of women in the past and relates briefly some of the ferment and change taking place among women today. 20 min., color. Available from MCC Peace Section, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA.

Growing Up Female: As Six Become One. Documentary on the American woman, ages 4-35. Illustrates the influence of parents, media, schools, advertising, and employees in shaping a woman's self-concept. 50 min., black & white, rental \$25. Order from Cokesbury Regional Service Centers.

Plays:

Adam and Even by Elizabeth Blake. Lifts up many of the problems of relationship between men and women - competition, employment, discrimination, masculine/feminine roles. Order from Plays for Living, Division of the Family Service Assoc., 44 East 23rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10010.

Note: Having trouble finding a particular book on women in church and society? The Mennonite Cooperative Bookstore, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46514 has a large selection of over 80 books on this topic. Send for an order form. For those wanting additional copies of the Nov. issue of Forum which discusses third world women and role flexibility, send your request to MCC Peace Section.